

We had only seen *Stibochiona nicea* once before and it took several trips before we finally found another – in the middle of the main road, knocked down by a car, on a day when we had not seen it nature! This was sufficient for Niklas – he was able to complete his analysis of the tribe Pseudergolini.

So far molecular systematics have resulted in significant changes in the way we view the higher classification. I am convinced that Niklas has the right end of the stick when it comes to the subfamily and tribal classification of the Nymphalidae. I have even agreed – and one does that with reluctance and much heart-searching – that the genus *Kamilla* Collins & Larsen, 1991 should be subsumed in *Junonia*. I still find it counter-intuitive, but the molecular data are too convincing.

In another study to which I contributed, Antonia Monteiro and Naomi Pierce analyzed the classification of some fairly mundane members of the Satyrinae, the large genus *Bicyclus* – no readers of this note would have problems in identifying them as typical Satyrinae. Now, this genus had been through the hands and the microscope of the excellent traditional taxonomist, Michel Condamin, in great detail in 1973. So what happened? The classification of species, subspecies, and species-groups of Condamin was generally confirmed. But the relationships between the various species-groups were radically changed – and I accept these changes. To my mind the paper of Monteiro & Pierce provides fine new data, without invalidating the splendid work of Condamin – and is that not exactly the way we want science to work?

So I am happy that I no more need be seen pulling the legs off butterflies in public and yet be able to contribute to molecular research. I am sure that we will get a flood of useful information.

Of course, at one time it was thought that male genitalia would answer all our taxonomic questions. They did not, and nor will molecular studies, but they will continue to give a much better picture of the relationships of the butterflies that we all love.— TORBEN B. LARSEN, UNDP Vietnam, c/o Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland (E-mail: torbenlarsen@netnam.vn).

### ***Phyllonorycter leucographella* (Zell.) (Lep.: Gracillariidae): Larval mines found on new foodplant**

*Phyllonorycter leucographella* was first discovered in Britain in 1989 feeding on Firethorn *Pyracantha*, since then it has been found on Apple *Malus* sp., Pear *Pyrus* sp, Hawthorn *Crataegus* sp. and Whitebeam *Sorbus aria*, all members of the Rosaceae.

On the morning of the 5 October I received a bag of leaf mines from Kevin Royles, a friend of mine, so that I could check his identifications. He had collected the mines on the 3 October from the Church Yard in Brington, Huntingdonshire. There were several mines from various tree species and amongst them was a London Plane leaf *Platanus hybrida* with a mine over the mid-rib. Kevin had suggested

*Phyllonorycter corylifoliella*, but to me it looked like *P. leucographella*. However, I had not heard of any previous record of this species feeding on this foodplant, so I photographed it and e-mailed the photograph to John Langmaid who confirmed my identification.

On the 14 October I visited Priory Park, St Neots, Huntingdonshire with the intention of finding *Cameraria ohridella* on the Horse Chestnuts in the park. After a lengthy search I eventually found a few mines on two trees. I thought while I was in the park I would record any other mines I saw, so I searched out as many different tree species I could find. Several London Plane have been planted in the park, so I checked them for *Phyllonorycter platani*. I then noticed several mines on the top of the leaves, which were identical to the mine previously seen. These proved to be further examples of *P. leucographella*. The large leaves on London Plane were supporting up to three individual mines along the mid-rib and on one leaf a mine was over the middle of one of the major veins to the side of the mid-rib.— BARRY DICKERSON, 27 Andrew Road, Eynesbury, St Neots Cambridgeshire PE19 2QE (E-mail Barry@eynesbury27.freeserve.co.uk).

### **A note on the Sandhill Rustic *Luperina nickerlii demuthi* Goater & Skinner (Lep: Noctuidae), especially its apparent capacity to survive under water**

The Sandhill Rustic *Luperina nickerlii demuthi* Goater & Skinner is abundant on salt marshes in south-east England, where it has been recorded from Essex, Kent and Suffolk. It comes readily to light (after about 11.30pm), especially to light traps placed in the middle of saltmarshes where the larval foodplant *Puccinellia maritima* occurs in abundance. Here it is by far the commonest moth; for example on 30 August 1998 on saltmarsh near West Mersea, 31 *demuthi* (three females, 28 males) came to 80 watt m.v. light between 11.30pm and 12.30am compared with 10 other moths consisting of four species.

I have never seen any of the other three British Isles *nickerlii* subspecies (*gueneei*, *knilli* and *leechi*) feed from flowers, although they have a functional proboscis which they use to imbibe water. However, I have a single sighting of a male *demuthi* taking nectar from Sea Lavender *Limonium vulgare* Miller at West Mersea on the same date; this plant is abundant on many saltmarshes in south-east England.

The areas from which *demuthi* is recorded are often under water at high tide. I once heard my generator come to a halt when the tide rose around it at The Swale, a saltmarsh in Kent. The moths must therefore be able to cope with regular submergence. Indeed, it is noticeable that, if trapping at low tide (the safest time to be out on the saltmarsh at night), *demuthi* flies along the runnels and up over the bank edges to the lamps. The estuary sites where *demuthi* is found may be as much as 7-8 km from the open sea, so that there is probably some reduction in the salinity of the water in comparison with the open sea.